



TOWN OF WESTFORD
OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

TOWN HALL
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New Center Building at 51 Main Street
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is being proposed at the site of the former Center Fire Station and why are we just hearing about this?

- *The Town is proposing to construct a new municipal building that will house several Town Departments and a multi-purpose Meeting Room. The former fire station will be demolished as part of this project. The Permanent Town Building Committee began planning this project in 2015 as part of the new Fire Headquarters project. The project has been discussed at **over 100 public meetings** over the last **8 years** and at four Town Meetings.*

2. What will be the size of the building?

- *The building will be a two-story structure that will have a total floor area of approximately **10,000 s.f.** over two stories. The size of the former fire station is approximately 7,000 square feet over two stories. The proposed building will not have a basement.*

3. What Town Departments will be located in the building?

- *The Veterans Services Office will be located on the first floor. On the second floor, there will be space for the Facilities Department and Technology Department, along with offices for the Wellness Coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator. Additionally, all town departments will have the opportunity to use the meeting room space.*

4. Why is the Meeting Room so big?

- *The Meeting Room will hold up to **100 people**. The space is designed to accommodate multiple functions simultaneously as the room can be divided into three separate spaces through the use of movable partition walls. The space is also designed to be used as a Training Room which can be used for many Town purposes, especially the Police Department whose previous Training Room was converted to the Combined Dispatch Center. The Police gave up their Training Room as part of the new Fire Headquarters project because they were promised that they would get a new training room in the future.*

5. Why do we need another big Meeting Room if the Library will also have one?

- *The existing Meeting Room at Town Hall is too small to accommodate all of the current needs of the over **80 Boards and Committees** that use this space. The room can only accommodate 20 visitors and most Select Board meetings have guests/visitors either standing along the walls or in the hallways. The new meeting room at the Library will have a similar demand for their space as their existing Meeting Room is frequently fully booked and requests for the space are regularly denied due to lack of availability. The Library meeting rooms will also be unavailable during the renovation and expansion project.*
- *The proposed meeting room will be wired to accommodate in person, remote and hybrid meetings to accommodate the changing needs of the town residents and town departments.*

6. Will there be adequate parking for the new building?

- *Yes, a Parking Study was completed in 2018 specifically for this project and it was determined that there is adequate parking in the Town Center to accommodate the staff and visitors to this building. The parking study can be viewed here:*
<https://westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8968/20181113---HSH-Memo-RE-Parking-Demand-Study>

7. Is the new parking lot being proposed behind 63 Main Street for this project?

- *No, this project is independent of the 51 Main project. However, this parking lot would add another 34 spaces that will connect the Town Hall and Roudenbush parking lots.*

8. Why is this project on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant if it was dismissed at the Special Town Meeting in October?

- *The Select Board has supported this project and feel it is a high priority for the Town. The project will also require an affirmative vote on the May Annual Town Election Ballot. The Departments and staff that will relocate to this building have been working in inadequate spaces and conditions for several years. The building will provide a central location for these Departments and staff including our vital technology equipment. Additionally, if this project is further delayed, the construction costs will continue to escalate.*

9. How much will this project cost, how much has been spent to date, and will my taxes go up to pay for this?

- *The estimated cost of the project is **\$12.4M**. The Town has committed approximately **\$900,000** to date on this project from appropriations at four previous Town Meetings and **\$92,000** in ARPA Funds. Construction funds for this project will require a debt exclusion ballot vote. The impact to the tax payers will be approximately **\$84** in the first year which is based on a median home value of **\$660,500**. The annual tax impact is expected to be lower in future years as other debt is retired.*

10. Will this project comply with the Town's goals for energy efficiency?

- *Yes, the Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, Westford Climate Action and the Town's Sustainability Coordinator have all collaborated with the Permanent Town Building Committee and their consultants to ensure this building will align with the Town's commitment to Net Zero emissions and sustainability. The building will contain many energy efficient features including a fully electric, highly efficient heating and cooling system that will utilize an air source heat pump. The building will also be designed to accommodate a future solar panel array.*

11. When will this project be completed?

- *If the project is approved at Annual Town Meeting and passes the ballot at the Town Election in May, construction could begin in early 2024 and be ready for occupancy in early 2025.*

12. If the project is not approved at Town Meeting, what will happen to the Fire Station?

- *There is no current plan to demolish the fire station if the new building is not constructed.*